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UNCLAS OSLO 000189

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EUR/NB DALLAND; EB/ESC/IEC GALLOGLY,
RGARVERICK, FDOWDY; NEA/I MAMITRANO
DOE FOR U/S GARMAN, PI FOR DPUMPHREY, ZHADDAD, FE FOR
EROSI, JSLUTZ, GDEHORATIIS, JSWIFT; LEKIMOFF

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ENRG](#) [EPET](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NO](#)

SUBJECT: PETROLEUM MINISTER SEEKS CLOSER BILATERAL
COOPERATION ON HIGH NORTH, OTHER ENERGY ISSUES

REF: A) 2005 OSLO 1796 B) 12/14/05 AMITRANO-APOSTOL
E-MAIL C) 2/15/06 GALLOGLY-APOSTOL E-MAIL

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. Please see
paragraph 4.

Petroleum Ministry Wants Closer Bilateral Dialogue

[1](#)2. (SBU) In the Ambassador's February 15 introductory
call on Norwegian Minister of Petroleum and Energy Odd
Roger Enoksen, Enoksen emphasized the importance Norway
placed on closer bilateral cooperation on energy
issues. Enoksen said he hoped to visit the United
States at the earliest opportunity, perhaps for a
United Nations' sustainable development conference in
May. He added that the Ministry was seeking to
organize meetings with U.S. energy officials in Oslo to
strengthen our bilateral energy dialogue. Priority
areas would include High North energy, energy security,
Norwegian LNG sales to the United States and Europe,
assistance to developing nations (including Iraq) to
improve petroleum sector management, and joint research
and development in new technologies (e.g. hydrogen
energy and carbon dioxide capture). The Ambassador
agreed that strengthening bilateral energy ties was a
top priority and offered to assist in arranging
meetings between Enoksen and Ministry officials and
U.S. counterparts.

Next Steps for High North Energy Development

[1](#)3. (SBU) Touching on High North energy, Enoksen
assured the Ambassador that the government's "Total
Management Plan" for the Barents would be published, as
scheduled, at the end of March. The document will
include the government's comprehensive plans for
exploiting Barents Sea energy resources and provide a
basis for awarding Barents acreage to bidders in the
19th petroleum licensing round. Enoksen thought that,
given the lead times in gathering and evaluating
technical seismic data, exploratory drilling in awarded
acreage should commence by 2008 or 2009. Enoksen
pointed out that although only two of more than 60
wells drilled in the Norwegian Barents had resulted in
commercial finds, the relatively unexplored area was
twice the size of the North Sea production zone, where
more than 1,000 wells had been drilled. Enoksen
stressed that the Barents region, with significant
resources on both the Norwegian and Russian sides of
the border, could become a major energy supplier to the
United States, beginning when the Statoil's Snoehvit
natural gas project comes on line next year.

[1](#)4. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST. Post fully supports the
Petroleum Minister's call for closer bilateral energy
cooperation and understands that Washington agencies
are agreeable to holding energy talks in Oslo this year
(refs). Post requests further guidance on possible
timing and priority agenda items for such talks.

WHITNEY

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